

The internet touches every part of my life.

Thank you for the opportunity to state my opinion, passion, and love for a free and highly accessible Internet.

To begin with let me introduce myself. I am a 29 year old beginning 1st year graduate student at the University of North Texas where I will be participating in their Online Masters in Anthropology program, focusing my studies on Cyber Anthropology. I am also a Web Developer/Designer, domain owner, system administrator, blogger, photographer, and Internet gamer. I am currently employed as a web developer/designer at a startup who's web application is used by private schools (both religious and secular) all over the United States.

On the personal front, I am a newly wed who 4 years ago first got to know my new husband via Instant Messaging (this was after meeting in real life first). I am a (step)mother to a bright and gifted 4 year old that uses the internet on a daily basis for education and entertainment purposes on her very own computer. I live between 30 and 200 miles away from my closest relatives and we all communicate via email and instant messaging. Lastly, every bill I pay is paid via one website or another, all my banking is handled online, and there are several business out there with whom my only communication is handled online.

As you can see, there is NO part of my life that the web has not touched. It is a part of my education and my basis for study, it is my job (not only my job but the entire basis for the company I work for), it is the way I handle most business, and it is my family's best source of communication. The Internet is not something I idly use on a semi-regular basis to simply shop or catch up on gossip, it is much much more than that. I think that you, the law makers, should make every effort to understand how the Internet is used and how it truly affects our lives.

The Internet is an integral tool in my life. I use it as I would a car, a telephone, or even electricity. I picked the location in which my house was built based on it's accessibility to high speed internet. I picked my college based on the fact it has an online program. I picked the mobile phone I used based on how easily it can access websites and email (and that was 4 YEARS ago). I would venture to say, that the Internet, more than any other tool I use, has had a definite affect on the way I live my life and the decisions I make for it.

To limit my access to the internet, the sites that I access, and the people that can access me would be to limit my life and drastically change the quality for the worse. I would likely lose my job as my company would go under without equal access to its customers and its customers to it. I would not be able to go to school not to mention the fact that the very subject matter I am studying (online culture and culture online) would effectively be slaughtered. There are hundreds, if not thousands of

people like me who use the Internet as much if not more than I do in every aspect of their lives.

Without us, the users (students, businesses, employees, entrepreneurs, parents, children, families, customers), the companies lobbying against Net Neutrality would likely not exist, or exist on a much smaller scale than they do today. This is the thanks we get for purchasing their products and services throughout the years? They effectively want the internet to stagnate as it lines their pockets in the immediate, not taking into account how this would affect the future of the internet for everyone, including themselves.

The money being used to convince those on Capital Hill that the Internet should be regulated and those in it for the profit should be the gatekeepers, would be much better spent on innovations, research and development, on spreading the access of the internet into every home and school in America. We should all be working together to move America forward, not hold it back. This is effectively what would happen if Net Neutrality were to disappear.

Net Neutrality is essential to free speech, equal opportunity and economic innovation in America. Since the FCC removed this basic protection in 2005, the top executives of phone and cable companies have stated their intention to become the Internet's gatekeepers and to discriminate against Web sites that don't pay their added tolls.

This fundamental change would end the open Internet as we know it. It would damage my ability to connect with others, share information and participate in our 21st century democracy and economy. The FCC must ensure that broadband providers do not block, interfere with or discriminate against any lawful Internet traffic based on its ownership, source or destination.

I only hope these 1s and 0s actually make it to someone who will read them instead of counting them as just another profit margin.

Sincerely,
Diana (Harrelson) Martin